



The Keystone

A Legacy for Our Children

“I didn’t have any idea a place like Red Rock Canyon existed just a few miles from the Las Vegas Strip.” This is a common expression made by first time visitors to Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

As you travel the 13-mile scenic drive, you will pass hills and mountains composed of Aztec sandstone. A part of a dune field that went as far as southwestern Colorado, it is brilliant red in places because of the presence of iron oxide.

As you make your way around the scenic drive you pass through the most dramatic part of this 197,000 acre national conservation area managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Initially designated in 1990 and expanded in 1996, this area conserves wildlife, plants and significant geologic resources while providing many types of recreation opportunities for all to enjoy.

Along the scenic drive you may come across some of the wildlife that inhabits this place, including wild horses and burros. The origin of the horses dates back to the days of Columbus and Hernando Cortez, Italian and Spanish explorers who brought horses to North America. Burros were brought to North America by Jesuit missionaries and were later used extensively by miners. Many of the descendants of these



photographs by Brian L. Buttazoni



animals escaped or were abandoned by early settlers, ranchers, prospectors, Native American tribes and the U.S. Calvary between the late 1800s and 1930s. In 1971 Congress enacted the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act, providing for the protection, management and control of wild horses and burros on public lands.

More than 20 years ago, people recognized the significance of this place. Today the support for Red Rock Canyon continues to strengthen. In late 2002 the U.S. Congress took further steps to enhance Red Rock Canyon. The legislation approved contained several important provisions. A trade of public and private lands near our eastern boundary will ensure the integrity of the conservation area. We usually think of wild lands in other places like the Rocky Mountains or Alaska. Under the legislation, two areas within this conservation area are designated as federal wilderness. These areas, now permanently protected as wilderness, will continue to provide recreation opportunities for people seeking out greater solitude, in addition to conserving important wildlife habitat.

“I can’t believe we missed out [on Red Rock Canyon] for all those years.” Fortunately Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area will be here for years and generations to come. Take some time today to get out and experience this place. No doubt you will have fond memories. *Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is a part of your legacy!*



Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is administered by the Bureau of Land Management.
Our website is: www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov

